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ABSTRACT

Two types of feedback are examined, and their use in controlling the processes of instructional development and improvement are discussed. Closed-loop feedback, the most direct, uses immediate feedback about a process or product to make immediate adjustments in it. Open-loop feedback, in which input cannot be changed immediately, uses feedback to make changes in a subsequent event. The consequences and applications of these two types of control for language teaching methodology, and specifically for languages for special purposes, are explored. The 2 control types are seen as related to instructional approaches, teacher-proof and teacher-autonomous, which have implications for materials, instructional need analysis, course design, evaluation, and the role and introduction of feedback in the classroom. The integration of feedback, evaluation, and learning is illustrated in the process of teaching a study skill, summary-writing. Appended materials include a checklist on classroom feedback management for teachers, instructions for teaching summary-writing, the Portuguese version of such a unit taught to electronics technicians, and a personal recording card to help students and teachers assess their own learning throughout the course. (MSE)

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WORKING PAPERS Nº 21

F E E D B A C K

A SYSTEMS APPROACH TO EVALUATION AND COURSE DESIGN

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JULY 1989

With an Appendix by

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FEEDBACK
A systems approach to evaluation and course design

PROLEGOMENON

What is Feedback?

What's the difference between:
Baking a cake and taking a shower?
Shooting at a target and driving a car?

The answer I was thinking of lies in the type of feedback which controls each process. Baking a cake and shooting at a target exemplify one type and taking a shower and driving a car illustrate another type. In systems analysis the concept of feedback is fundamental for determining how simple physical processes - both natural and in man-made systems,- operate and can be controlled.

The classroom is just another such system and feedback has always played an important role, since students need to know how they are learning and teachers need to make use of this information.

The problem addressed in this paper stems from the fact that we traditionally pay very little attention to ways in which different types of feedback can help in controlling classroom processes. Thus we propose to use some insights from systems analysis and apply them in the classroom.

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*The final appendix was supplied by Tânia Mara Franco Cavalcanti based upon her work at the Escola Técnica Federal de Química, Rio de Janeiro

FEEDBACK
A systems approach to evaluation and course design
1.0 Feedback and Control

1.1 Two types of feedback

Systems analysis deals with processes and how they are controlled. It has given us many terms which, once specialized, are now used in everyday life, such as ***input, output, and feedback***. It's useful at this point to go back and examine what these terms mean. To illustrate them, let's take the example of the shower, where we combine hot and cold water in a mixer tap to obtain warm water of the right temperature. The inputs to the system are the hot and cold water, the output is warm water at the desired temperature.

However, it is not enough to simply open the tap and let the water flow. We usually find during the process of taking the shower that we need to adjust the temperature. For example, at first the hot water is fairly cool, so as it becomes hotter we need to reduce the proportion of hot water in the input. Later on we may get used to the temperature of the shower, and want hotter water, so again we change the proportion of hot water in the input. We can make other changes, from a dribble of water to torrential cascade, in which case we can change the volume. Thus we can say that the process can be ***controlled.***

The way that control takes place is via feedback, which in this case comes from the person taking the shower. He or she detects the difference between the current output and the desired output and alters the input accordingly. This kind of feedback, which goes directly back to the input, is called ***closed-loop feedback.*** If your shower is of the electric kind, then think for a minute about how you control the process. You make similar decisions, and in both cases the output is water of the desired quantity and volume

Another kind of feedback is given by the example of baking a cake. In this case we cannot change the inputs once they have gone into the system. We have our recipe, the amount of ingredients, and the instructions for mixing and baking. The feedback, however, occurs at the very end of the process. When the cake has been baked and is allowed to cool we can finally cut a slice and sample it. Thus, the feedback occurs when the final output is produced. The fundamental difference between this process and taking the shower lies in the fact that the feedback cannot control the inputs in the process once it has begun. The only way in which the feedback can influence the system is by changing the inputs the **next time** we set up the process. Thus with our cake, we may decide next time to add more sugar or less butter. We cannot change the composition of the cake once it has gone into the oven. This type of feedback, where we can only change a subsequent process is called ***open-loop feedback***

1.2 Feedback and Teaching

What relevance does this have for language teaching? Setting up and teaching a course is part of a system and we can apply the concept of two types of feedback and control to the process of course design and evaluation.

The most common type of control has traditionally been through open-loop feedback. The teacher begins with a recipe and puts the ingredients together: the materials, the activities, the texts, and the course design. Usually at the end of the course the students are evaluated, and they may even give their own evaluation of the course. It is then that the teacher acquires the feedback and decides on the changes to make for the next course.

Open-loop control may be useful for baking a series of cakes until the cook acquires the necessary expertise, but in teaching a course, the students must be patient as year after year the teacher aims to 'get the recipe right' for the following year. Some teachers gradually perfect their materials, hoping one day to reach the ideal formula for the inputs. Thus, the home-produced textbook has often been a favoured goal of some teams of teachers. Many teams spend a great deal of time working out a course design which can then be used for all classes, year after year.Unfortunately, other aspects of the input vary, - the students themselves, their needs and their wants. So the search for the perfect input materials may never reach a conclusion.

Can closed-loop control fit into teaching? To answer this question we need to consider how we could provide for evaluation of the output during the process and not merely evaluate the output at the end of the course. Feedback must influence the inputs during the course. Using this framework we cannot begin with a rigid plan but must make explicit allowance for changes during the process. This means saying goodbye to an all-sufficient textbook, a rigid course plan and a single end-of course evaluation. This alternative may be more demanding, but at least has the advantage of not imposing pre-determined solutions on students who vary form course to course and from year to year.

Historically open-loop control has governed course design and materials preparation for many reasons. First because for applied linguists and other 'experts' it is easier to give 'recipes' to teachers than to help them become aware of how to channel continuous feedback during the course. Secondly because for the publishers and writers of textbooks open-loop feedback is the only viable model. Thirdly because for teachers it is less demanding to set up a course design and use materials in a fixed order than to continually be prepared to change plans and materials.

In the rest of this working paper we shall explore the consequences of these two types of control and investigate their applications for language teaching methodology, especially with regard to course design and evaluation

2.0 Feedback in the Classroom

2.1 Two Views of Methodology: Teacher-Proof and Teacher-Autonomous

Following the two types of systems control that we distinguished, in teacher training and language teaching methodology we can find a similar division. These two types of control can be traced from the basic approach, to the design and finally into the procedures used in the classroom, to use the Richards and Rodgers (1986) division of 'method'. In the Brazilian ESP Project they can also be followed by examining the topics which teachers discuss and the content of workshops and seminars.

The more widespread view is based on open-loop control and we might call it the 'teacher-proof' approach. This term was originally applied to materials where everything was previously set up so that even the most disastrous teacher could not make a mess of the lesson. (The kind of materials where the teachers' notes say: *'Spend 5 minutes on ex. 3, then draw a sun on the blackboard and ask the students 'What's the weather like today?'*) The main characteristic of the approach is a reliance on formulas and recipes and in particular on 'right' and 'wrong' procedures, methods and materials. Throughout, this 'teacher-proof' approach is concerned with helping teachers to use materials and techniques in order to deal with situations which may not always be familiar.

The second approach we may call the 'teacher-autonomous' model. In this we focus not on formulas or recipes, but on finding more about what goes on in the classroom. An experienced teacher already knows that the 'right' materials can be used with the 'wrong' students or at the 'wrong' time and that value judgements are not always consistent. What is important is that the teacher is **aware** of what is going on in the classroom and the reactions of the students, - which are changing all the time- to what is being taught. In this case, the focus is not on what **should** happen, but what **can** happen and how the teacher can become part of these classrooms processes.

Of course, both of these approaches can be appropriate in different contexts. For example it is not much help to a novice teacher to say 'Teach what you think is suitable; all this material is good. Just feel your way.' In the same way you can't say to an experienced teacher: 'Never teach your students songs, this is an ESP reading strategies course.' In the Brazilian ESP Project, just as in most of the teacher training literature, advice to teachers falls heavily into the teacher-proof category, aimed at relatively inexperienced teachers. Work related to the teacher-autonomous approach is usually in the form of research, where teachers must do their own creative extrapolation to apply the conclusions to their own classroom practice.

When we make comparisons it is almost instinctive to try to identify one approach as 'better', but in absolute terms this is impossible and confusing: appropriateness depends on the circumstances. Historically, however the teacher-proof approach has had more than its fair share in the Brazilian ESP Project. To use Richards and Rogers' categories, the TP approach to methodology presents a single 'Method' as being the best and attributes failures in the classroom to the teachers' failures to put the method into practice. In the stage of design, where we decide on the objectives and the roles of learners, teachers and materials, once again a TP approach will specify what these roles should be. It may be that we advocate 'freedom' and 'student responsibility', but this too can be imposed in a TP way. The stage of procedures, where we deal with questions of classroom management can also be included in this classification, as a TP approach recommends certain classroom techniques as being inherently appropriate. We can even look on the topic of research from this point of view. The TP approach to research implies a certain series of steps to follow in order to be considered 'good' research, and certain ways in which data can be analysed. The teacher-autonomous approach would focus more on the usefulness and relevance of the information obtained rather than following research procedures for their own sake.

2.2 Gramatiquice and Estrategice

In setting up a course design the main concern of most teachers is to define objectives which can be attained in the course and are relevant to the needs of the learner. Thus, in the Brazilian ESP Project at an early stage we focused on objectives which gradually changed as the Project developed, pooling its collective experience and absorbing the insights of specialists, - both visiting and home-grown - and contemporary research.

Some of the areas which have concerned us might be as follows:

1. Specialist language;
2. Academic texts, text structure
3. Reading strategies
4. Individualization; student autonomy
5. Conscientização; critical reading
6. Study skills; summarizing

No doubt in the future more areas of interest will arise.

As listed above it seems to show 'progress' from the dark ages when we thought that ESP was based on 'special' language to a new age of enlightenment when we focus on building awareness and getting to grips with learning skills. In fact this simply reflects the increasing experience of teachers and the changing needs of students over the period. Most teachers felt that the focus on strategies rather than language was an advantage, as reported in Celani et al (1988) but it is interesting that very often teachers and students differed in their perception of what was being learned and what was being taught. It may be that although course content has changed, teachers' attitudes to learning and their students have stayed the same.

For example, many materials prepared by teachers show a strong leaning towards the teacher-proof (TP) approach. The syllabuses are carefully structured and each unit has a set of exercises in which the objectives are divided into a series of 'sub-objectives'. In the same way that a structure item like the present perfect could be divided up into little exercises, some of the materials may take a skill such as 'Skimming for general comprehension' and divide it into neat little exercises, so that the students have exercises training them in identifying cognates, looking for repeated words, non-linear information etc. It looks carefully organised and it solves the problem of how to teach a complex topic, but this is not the way that strategies are acquired or used in real life. We're all aware of the previous sins of teaching language structure in a de-contextualised way, as an end in itself -the perils of 'gramatiquice', but in the same way, there are lots of materials that fall into the category of what Ramos has called 'estrategice'; an excessive focus on de-contextualised strategies.

Thus, it is not enough to change the content of the course, we have to be aware of how we can control the learning process during the course. A teacher-proof approach solves the immediate problems of what to do on Monday morning or next semester, for the insecure teacher, but does not offer a lasting solution for meeting learner needs.

2.3 Materials

The TP approach usually aims at producing a complete set of materials that will be used during the whole course, from start to finish. A whole team of teachers may work on this, pilot the materials, perfect them, and finally reach a finished product. The team heaves a sigh of relief. The materials have been prepared! Other teams in other

institutions try to get hold of copies, expecting to find a solution for their problems too. The first team may even publish the course materials as a textbook.

There is nothing wrong in itself with a complete set of materials; the only problem comes from how it's used. If it's regarded as a definite solution then it soon becomes a burden and a straightjacket. The teachers change, the students change, the materials are the same, and as dissatisfaction grows, the materials may be completely rejected and the whole materials preparation process starts again.

This illustrates the problems of the TP approach. The first feelings that a problem has been solved and the subsequent sense of frustration, or rather the awareness that the problem is much more complex, but not necessarily much more difficult. It simply requires greater flexibility and a willingness to learn from experience.

2.4 Needs Analysis

Needs Analysis is usually considered to be a fundamental part of the ESP Approach. The teacher finds out the needs and previous experience of students and changes the course design accordingly. This seems to throw responsibility onto the teacher who independently works out the priorities for the course. But Needs Analysis can be used in a TP way as well, and this seems to happen very often in the Project. A Needs Analysis is carried out just once and the results are not channelled into the course design. For example, in the evaluation of the Project discussed in Celani et al. (1988) it was reported that the ESP teams taking part in the research administered questionnaires to their students but did not themselves incorporate the results into changes in their own course design. Thus, the Needs Analysis element of the questionnaires was considered more an opportunity for students to express their opinions than for the teacher to make changes in the course design.

2.5 Course Design

The TP Approach presents a course design in terms of definite objectives within which the units are structured. It doesn't matter how humanistic or how behavioristic the objectives, it is the arrangement of these objectives which is characteristic of TP. For example, as we mentioned before, strategies can be taught in as rigid a manner as the present perfect/past simple distinction in grammar. Conscientização and critical reading can also be in the same way; materials can teach students to use Scott's (1988) 'set theory' approach to critical reading, but if they do not have the opportunity later to select and criticise texts on their own they will have acquired only the outer shell of critical reading.

2.6 Evaluation

When we look at the question of evaluation and turn to the literature on the topic we have the impression that this area of language teaching methodology has been taken over by big business and huge corporations, and left no room for the archaic and quaint work of individual craftsmen working in isolation. It's like someone seeking a chamomile insfusion for a stomach upset when the doctor offers only a major operation and at least three weeks in hospital.

For a TP approach, evaluation is synonymous with tests, which we may define as: **formal devices for evaluating specific abilities, which have been taught by the teacher and learned by the students.**

Researchers concern themselves with distinctions between progress tests, achievement tests, and discuss the problems of selecting the right items in terms of discrimination, difficulty and so on. There is an implicit assumption that the only respectable form of evaluation is by a specially produced published battery of tests that have been tried and tested all over the world. There seems little help for the teacher concerned with channelling feedback on his students' progress, as we have been discussing up to now.

For most teachers the 'testing problem' arises from the fact that 'tests' so often differ greatly from the normal learning activities. This separation between learning and evaluation leads to several features. One is the 'testing problem' where teachers find they devote a disproportionate amount of time preparing and marking tests. Another is that evaluation is an interruption to the learning process. For example, the week before the test the students must be prepared for it, and the week after, the teacher goes through the questions to see where and how the students went wrong or got it right.

The worst aspect of preparing tests is that however wonderful the test may be, it cannot be used over and over again. The next test must be prepared from the very beginning again, since students soon get wise if a teacher is found to be re-using last year's tests!

2.7 The Role of Feedback

We have followed through the Teacher-Proof approach in various aspects of what may be called 'teacher-training issues'. As can be seen, what happens is that TP offers immediate solutions , but as time goes by, problems begin to emerge as the solutions seem too simplistic, teachers become more experienced and demanding. Normally, as the individual teacher acquires more experience and confidence she gradually moves from a concern with the right or wrong methods, procedures and materials and focuses more on how the students are learning and how best to promote this, without a dependence on outside expertise.

An assumption is often made that teachers will of their own accord move to greater autonomy, once they acquire confidence in the teacher-proof approach. It seems obvious that this change must take place sooner or later, to a greater or lesser extent, but there is no guarantee of this. The teacher-training literature does not speak of this change and teachers normally have very little time to prepare materials and course design so as to consciously experiment with their own approaches and effect a transition from TP to a more autonomous standpoint.

The concept of TA/TP approaches is useful in evaluating the teacher-training literature and in particular recommendations concerning certain 'methods'. Hutchinson and Waters' (1987) advocacy of a learning-centred approach is a case in point. When they reject approaches such as the 'skills-centred' syllabus, (as exemplified by the Brazilian ESP Project!) they are assuming that it is applied in a TP way, -ignoring the role of conscientização, for example, - while they assume that their 'learning-centred' approach is applied in a TA way with the teacher and student working flexibly, always attentive to feedback on the learning experience. It does not take a major effort of the imagination to see how their approach could be applied in a rigid TP way

By this time we may set down some guiding principles for increasing teacher autonomy. We are a little reluctant to do this, since

we may be accused of giving teacher-proof recipes, which is a weakness of any teacher-autonmous 'advice'! However let's assume these are general statements coming from experience, rather than rules to be followed.

Towards autonomy:

We aim to regulate our classroom practice and course design by closed-loop control, in response to continuous feedback.

We try to channel feedback not only to the teacher but also make it available to the students.

We need to set up our classroom management, materials, course design and evaluation procedures so as to take this form of feedback and control into account.

It may not be possible to make explicit changes to ready-prepared materials or to formal course design. The real difference may come from a change in the attitudes of the teacher reflected in the way the materials are used in the classroom and the way the course design is put into practice or altered.

2.8 Introducing Feedback

In these first sections of the working paper we hope that we have shown the importance of closed-loop feedback as a way of working towards a goal of greater teacher autonomy. In the rest of the working paper we shall try to deal with particular aspects of course design where the teacher and student can benefit from more meaningful feedback. We shall look in particular at the problem of evaluation. First, however we need to set evaluation within the context of the course design: the analysis of needs and the specification of objectives.

3.0 Feedback and Course Design

3.1 Course Design

The stages of the classic course design process are usually given as follows:

1. Needs Analysis:
   Identify the students' needs and wants.
2. Evaluate the constraints.
3. Specify your objectives
4. Prepare your materials
5. Set up your course.
6. Evaluate your students.
7. Evaluate success of course.

In the ESP tradition, Needs Analysis has always been a cornerstone of course design. It seems like an excellent example where the teacher uses feedback to determine the objectives of the course, in selecting materials, topics, and choosing the activities that are most appropriate for the students.

Needs Analysis can supply us with important information such as:
Students' attitudes to learning English,
Their degree of motivation,
Their previous experience of English,
Their expectations of the course
Their knowledge of the subject matter
Composition of the class

This information then goes to defining the objectives and setting up a course design. Just to take some obvious examples, if students have had a previous training in English that was heavily dependent on grammar then we shall have to incorporate into the course design a large component of conscientização and strategy-building, but we shall also be able to use this knowledge of language structure in many exercises and activities. Another example would be if the students have little specialist knowledge then we shall have to select texts that are not specialized in content, and so on.

3.2 Problems of Needs Analysis

The main problem with this TP type of Needs Analysis is that it is carried out only once, at the beginning of the course. The objectives are defined and the course design then fixed. Another problem may be that the interpretation of the results is confined to the teacher, and may not even be discussed with the students, in which case the feedback obtained from Needs Analysis is even more limited.

Let's take a practical example. It is common at the beginning of the course to find that students definitely do not want anything to do with spoken English. The questionnaires show that they only want to read in the areas of their specialism, and that they may even hate the very idea of having to speak English. So, we exclude spoken English from our course design and everyone is happy. It is also common that as the course goes on, the students develop an interest or curiosity in learning a little more spoken English. They start to say 'Good evening, teacher' and ask for songs or videos to vary the routine. The teachers' reaction at this point must take into account the fact that the students' needs have changed. There are two solutions. To explain once again the objectives of the course and the impossibility of changing them, or to discuss ways of incorporating some spoken English into the course, without detracting from the work on reading for academic purposes. What could happen is that the language of the classroom may change, the teacher may give instructions in English, and students may speak in English when and if they feel like it. The teacher will be satisfying some of these changed wants without changing fundamentally the objectives of the course.

In the majority of learning experiences, the needs and wants of students - and teachers! - change during the course and questionnaires only give part of the picture, - very often just the part that the teacher wants to know about. Also in most ESP courses we consciously set out to change student attitudes to learning, reading, language, and so on. It is at least inconsistent if we set up a course design on the basis of needs and wants which we know will be changed during the course!

It appears, however, to be much less trouble to set up an unchangeable course design and carry out a single Needs Analysis at the beginning of the course. Thus, within our criteria, this type of Needs Analysis belongs very firmly to the teacher-proof tradition.

3.3 Needs Analysis and Closed-Loop Feedback

How could we change Needs Analysis so that it gave us feedback throughout the course instead of only at the beginning? One solution would be to carry out a regular Needs Analysis at various stages during the course, and channel the results back to the students. This doesn't mean that we should prepare formal questionnaires which we regularly give to students, but that teachers should be assessing students' needs

at regular intervals and discussing them in class.

Where do we get the information from in order to draw our conclusions and channel our feedback? In classic Needs Analysis we have the questionnaire, administered at the beginning of the course, and as many teachers who took part in the Project Evaluation research know, the data given by questionnaires is interesting but has its limitations. This was one reason why the Evaluation attempted to draw on other sources for information, such as classroom discussion. If you ask someone to check a set of alternative answers the results are relatively easy to process but may be different to the answers obtained to the question when it has been discussed freely in groups.

This obtaining information from two or more sources is called **triangulation**. It refers to an operation in geometry, and in real life, where in order to estimate distance you need information from two or more points. This is why, for example, most animals have two eyes, -so they can judge distance, and why you will find it very difficult to play tennis, or any ball game with one eye closed. If we have information from more than two sources of data then our accuracy will increase.

Thus, in research of this kind it is important whenever possible to triangulate data, since data from one source will only give us a 'two dimensional' restricted view. In the classroom we have several sources of data for our feedback:

Classroom observation: what the teacher sees, hears and feels and how she interprets the goings-on in the classroom.

Student production: how students perform on tasks, exercises or activities that are part of the course.

Results of tests: how students perform on tests that are carried out periodically to determine the way in which the objectives of the course are being achieved by the students and the teacher.

Informal Needs Analyses: during the course we can also carry out Needs analysis at regular intervals, by giving questionnaires or by promoting informal discussions from time to time. In practice the most common way this is done is by giving students a questionnaire at the end of the course to discover which of the needs the students consider they have fulfilled and to detect any changes in attitudes or awareness which have taken place during the course.

As we mention these different ways of evaluating student needs and wants it becomes clear how much these resemble instruments for gathering research data. Indeed, Needs Analysis is simply a specific type of classroom research aimed at obtaining data to be used in the course design. The ESP teacher who carries out on-going Needs Analysis of this type is already carrying out informal classroom research.

In Appendix Three we give an example of a way of incorporating on-going Needs Analysis into the course, using the Personal Reporting Cards as proposed by Cavalcanti (1988)

3.4 Course Design

The literature on course design discusses alternative ways to setting up a sequence of objectives so that they offer a learning experience consistent with the aims of the course and the teacher's own views of language learning. However, it matters little if a lockstep course design or a 'spiral' syllabus is adopted if they are set up in a rigid manner and are not changed during the course. In fact the more complex a course design becomes, the more difficult it is to alter it or interfere with it. Thus, hours spent in discussion with colleagues to prepare a neat spiral syllabus design may lead to a spiral straitjacket

during the rest of the course.

One solution would be a 'modular' course, where materials are prepared according to certain objectives and graded according to level of difficulty, but are then used in the sequence determined by the teacher. Thus units can be changed, substituted or expended as the needs arises.

3.5 Type of Syllabus

What should be the nature of these objectives? Is it enough to label them in terms of strategies, or a level of comprehension or a study skill, as has been common up to now? As we mentioned earlier, the problems of gramatiquice and estrategice arise when we teach these items in isolation, and without a context. We shall examine here the claims for a task-based syllabus in which we define an objective in terms of an appropriate task where certain strategies are useful or necessary, rather than by simply citing the strategies themselves. Thus, instead of defining as objective 'skimming for general comprehension' we would define a task where the skills would be useful, such as 'Note-taking to get the general idea of a text'.

There are several important advantages of this type of syllabus.

First the strategies are taught as before, but they are taught in context. We are not interested in how many cognates or typographical clues the students recognises as an aim of the activity, what we are interested in is how the student makes use of these strategies to get an overall idea of what is going on in the text and how the ideas fit together.

Secondly the learning is **meaningful.** Learning and doing are complementary processes. Thus students are not learning strategies or language in isolation ready for the distant day when they will eventually do something with all this learning. The student begins with a task, perhaps simple and easy at the beginning, but nonetheless a valid task in itself and is immediately doing something with the language. It is much easier to get students to discuss learning and learning problems when they are engaged in meaningful activities and so that helps to maintain the flow of feedback.

Thirdly, evaluation takes place not according to abstract criteria defined by language items or isolated strategies, but according to achievement on a task. Thus evaluation can become a realistic activity rather than something separate from language learning and language use..

Fourthly, in accounting for what we have done we can point to students' achievements on the task rather than isolated test scores. We can be criticised according to the relevance of the tasks that the students carried out, but not for hiding what went on in the classroom by a test several steps removed from reality.

Finally, by structuring tasks we can move from more simple to more complex and in this way evolve a coherent course design that will be relevant to student needs.

4.0 Feedback and Evaluation

4.1 Evaluation and Testing

For many years the terms evaluation and testing were synonymous, as students' progress and final grade were given by test results. It was a tradition for many centuries that all the work and study that a student devoted to his subject would be evaluated by a single set of

'final exams' at the end of three or four years of university. In some institutions the final grade on a course is still given by the result obtained in a single test. However in most situations a final grade is given by a combination of results of written assignments, classroom work and one or more formal tests. As we mentioned before, it is this formal test which causes problems for the teacher and in a TP approach gives rise to the 'testing problem' where the teacher spend more time with problems of testing than the teaching or learning.

4.2 Why Test?

There are many, perhaps superficial reasons for testing. There is the insistence of institutions that students must be tested, an insistence supported by parents or even the students themselves. There is the reason of discipline, the teacher can threaten a test to keep students quiet and can re-assert authority by means of a test. What we would like to examine here, though, are the more important reasons for formally evaluating students' learning.

First a formal evaluation is an explicit channeller of feedback. It takes place at regular intervals during the course, and the results are explicitly communicated to the class. This provides a structuring of students' progress in a way that 'continuous assessment' cannot provide. The grade that is part of the feedback of a test is a symbol that all students recognise when comparing their achievements with their expectations and those of their colleagues. Students may not like the idea of tests and may get 'upset' during tests, but they often insist on the teacher giving them a grade, even if they know they have not come up to expectations.

Secondly a formal evaluation is an important way of showing accountability in the learning process, with information not just for the teachers and the individual students, but also for sponsors, heads of department and other colleagues. If others wish to know what is going on in your course they can examine the activities that students carried out and compare that with the final grade.

These two aspects of evaluation give two important criteria: any form of testing must be as informative and meaningful as possible, because through them the information is channelled to teacher and student and also communicated with colleagues and other interested people. The tradition up to now has been to focus on reliability and to control factors to ensure that the marks are fair and reflect classroom preference. However the 'numbers game' approach significantly reduces the information conveyed by a test.

In the TP tradition this becomes an acute problem. The teacher takes on the task of having to prepare formal tests, administer them and mark them. The tests, as well as becoming a burden in terms of the time and the effort required, are often an interruption to the learning process, not an integral part of it. However, a shift of emphasis from the test as grading instrument to the test as feedback instrument may show us a way out of the difficulty. In this discussion we shall use the word 'evaluation' as well as test to show that we are talking of a various types of feedback instrument rather than simply a mechanism for grading students. The word test implies for many people a formal activity often separate from what usually goes on in the classroom. By evaluation we can include activities such as written work, oral discussions, or even questionnaires. Thus, although we can refer to 'teacher-proof' tests and 'teacher-autonomous' tests, when we refer to evaluations the reader may have a less restricted view.

4.3 Information from evaluations

What can an evaluation tell us? As opposed to a Needs Analysis, we can find out the following:

Achievement: the students' progress in relation to the pre-established objectives of the course. Is the course progressing faster or slower than expected?

Diagnosis: as a corollary to achievement, is progress evenly balanced in relation to all the objectives of the course or are there some areas where the students are encountering difficulties or finding things very easy?

Individual performance: how are the students doing in relation to one another; what individual differences affect performance.

Relevance: after achieving the pre-established objectives of the course, can students then use what they have learned to solve real-life problems?

This leads us to establish some criteria for evaluation instruments or tests:

(a) Validity: Is the test representative of the course content?

(b) Reliability: Does the test score reflect the student's ability?

(c) Relevance: Does the test fit into the learning process?

(d) Informative: Can the test be a way for the teacher to channel feedback, diagnose problems etc.

(e) Meaningful: Can students understand the test results and change learning patterns accordingly?

The criteria called 'informativity' and 'meaningfulness' as far as we are aware are new. We have tried to make a distinction between the ways that teachers and professionals see tests and how the students themselves see them. Let's examine the categories in more detail.

4.4 Validity: How does the evaluation represent course content?

Does the test reflect what has been taught? This is the characteristic question to assess the validity of a test. This is an old problem; for example, if we teach oral English and give our students a written test, the result may be reliable, but will not be valid. In the same way, if we give students in an EAP reading comprehension course a multiple choice reading comprehension test, then we may not have a valid result, especially if the course dealt with critical reading and awareness-building!

Another example, quite common in the Project, is where we attempt to teach and test strategies in isolation and then judge whether or not a student can read in his specialism by the score on such a test. We know that strategies do not exist in isolation and that to evaluate reading comprehension in terms of individual strategies is like evaluating a swimmer in terms of scores on breathing, arm movements, leg movements etc without ever getting into the water. We can only evaluate the final ability of a student in an EAP reading comprehension by his performance on an activity which approximates to the final objectives of our course.

Another aspect is the type of strategy used by the student in taking the test. It has recently been shown (Alderson 1988) and Nevo (1989) that the student's 'test-taking strategies' may be quite different from the reading strategies we have assumed would be used in the situation of the test. In this case the test is not going to give a valid result.

4.5 Reliability: Does the score reflect the ability of the student.

Historically this criterion was concerned with establishing the reliability of a test score across different populations so that when someone got 85% he could be compared with another student with the same score but from a different class or different school. In other words the test can be replicated.

In our case, however, the classroom teacher is probably concerned with only the issue of fairness. The test score should reflect the student's ability and neither teacher nor student should be surprised by an 'unexpected' result that does not reflect what has happened during the course. It undermines the credibility of any evaluation if it is not consistent with the rest of the course. In our case, we have a problem since the test score can be matched with several other types of feedback, from classwork, oral presentations, and so on. In a course where we aim to channel feedback to the student, the test will have to stand up to several other important measures.

4.6 Relevance: Does the test fit into the learning process?

This criterion, is emphasised by Shipman (1988) when discussing the characteristics of research. This criterion refers to the relationship between the investigation (in our case, evaluation) and the process that is being investigated. The research must not cause major changes in the process. For example, we could investigate children's motivation in the primary school by extensive video recordings. This may involve a whole team of camera men and lighting equipment, and we could film the children individually and in small groups. We could then analyse the results and evaluate the motivation of the children, but this would reflect a totally artificial situation which had little to do with what went on normally in the classroom. The research would not be relevant to the normal classroom, it would be an interruption to what usually takes place.

For a test to be relevant it must be part of the learning process and not an interruption to it. In other words, testing or evaluating must not interfere with learning. In the same way, we may set up a battery of tests and train our students in taking the tests, but this again would be an interruption to the learning process not a part of it, and we would be focusing more on how students take tests than on how they learn.

Taken to the context of evaluating the course, we should seek to make our evaluation activities as nearly as possible resemble learning activities. In other words, students must react the same and show the same strategies and processes in an evaluation activity as they would in an ordinary learning activity.

This would also avoid some of the 'testing problem' in that we would not need to spend extra time preparing our students for their tests, or spend time preparing materials for tests. The 'tests' would be just another classroom activity, and could use classroom materials.

4.8 Meaningfulness: Can students understand the test results and change learning patterns accordingly?

Face validity is a criterion that has long been recognised as important: in other words students must believe in a test and do it in the sincere belief that the test is a real one and is useful to them. We are going a little further than that, though, so that the test itself conveys information to the students on what has gone well and what has not been so successful. We often do this in the case of bad students.

How often have you found yourself taking a specially long time marking a poor student's test so that you could show him in detail the mistakes he'd made?

Sometimes in a diagnostic test, specific items can point to specific objectives in the course. We can say to the student 'From this test it's obvious that you should improve your vocabulary inference strategies', or more traditionally, 'It's obvious you need to work on your prepositions'. The student then goes off with the test and does exercises designed to improve those skills he is weak at. Everyone feels that this is useful, although in real life learning it is difficult to isolate a single skill and say 'That's where you're going wrong. Cure that and you'll be fine'.

Clearly, then, if we are to incorporate evaluation as part of a process of closed-loop control of our course we shall have to re-think the traditional test. and the way the results are presented and communicated to students.

4.7 Informativity: Can the test performance be a way for the teacher to channel feedback and diagnose problems?

Test results should provide information for students, teachers and outsiders, so that we can find out what is going on and how the learning process takes place. As we said before, in our context we could not be satisfied in saying the course was a success simply because everyone got 80% in the exam. We would like to know the strong and weak points of the course, and if we are students, of our own learning. In practice this means that exams of the multiple-choice type can be very un-informative, especially as they are usually not valid instruments in the first place. It may mean that in terms of informativity a test must be a series of activities which give a wider opportunity for evaluating different strategies.

There are dividends from an informative test. For example we can show outsiders (the school director, colleagues, other students, a sponsor..) what has been going on in a way much more illuminating than a simple test score. Furthermore, an informative evaluation provides us with research data that can help us to carry out a closer investigation into what is going on in the course.

It is interesting to observe that the more we try to introduce closed-loop feedback into testing and evaluation the more testing grows to resemble research. And indeed why should there be any difference? Carrying carrying out research into learning and evaluating are essentially the same processes. The only difference is that the results of the testing operation are channelled back to the learners while traditionally the results of research have been communicated to other members of the profession. Perhaps it helps us to re-think testing be considering it as classroom research in which the results are presented to students and discussed with them.

5.0 Integrating Evaluation and Learning

Let us now give an example to illustrate our theme. We shall take a course component, in this case a study skill, and show how it can serve as an instrument for channeling feedback for teacher and learners, at different stages of the course. This means we shall examine how it can serve equally as part of the processes of evaluation and learning.

5.1 The summary as a study-skill

Our example of closed-loop control in practice, will be the skill of summary writing as featured in an an ESP course. By summary we mean a study skill where the reader re-constructs the main ideas of a text for future reference and study. For this reason Sarig (1988) uses the term 'study-summary'. We shall examine the study-summary as a means of evaluating and then focus on how this can be integrated into a course design. This will lead us to use the concept of the task-based syllabus in course design.

5.2 Summaries as evaluation instruments

Recently, much attention has been focused on the use of summaries as a means of evaluating reading comprehension in EAP (Holmes 1988; Holmes and Ramos 1989, Cohen 1988, Sarig 1988, Johns 1988). The arguments advanced for summaries fit in closely with the idea of closed-loop control in course design, since summarizing is a process which fulfils many of the criteria we outlined in the previous section: it can be made reasonably reliable with the aid of a marking scheme, it is valid since summary-writing reflects the objectives of the EAP course, and it is relevant, since summary-writing can be introduced as a learning activity or an evaluation activity. It is meaningful since the student appreciates its direct usefulness in real life and it is also informative as it can supply data on the learning process (as shown in Holmes and Ramos 1989) and so fulfils the criteria of meaningfulness and informativity

5.3 Summaries and course design

Summaries can also be fitted into course design, that is to say, it is possible to take a 'target' summarizing activity and break it down in simpler components which can be taught at earlier stages in the course, and can serve as objectives in the course design. In the case of a strategy-based syllabus, we have seen that one problem comes from breaking strategies down into sub-strategies which are taught one at a time. Human beings just do not learn like this. To take an example, it is no good teaching a student to look for cognates as an isolated strategy, without some notions of language structure and some idea of text organization and self-monitoring. The result is disastrous (Ramos 1988) if the student is encouraged to use the single strategy in isolation.

Another advantage of the summary is that we can fit this type of activity into a task-based syllabus. This brings other benefits: tasks have meaning, -they make sense to the learner, and if a target task can be broken down into simpler sub-tasks, then we have a structure for the syllabus where the learner can build up strategies and language knowledge and bring them into action in a meaningful way.

5.4 Task Criteria and Summaries

Let us see how the summarizing task can be structured so that students follow a learning path where the tasks gradually increase in complexity. In formulating the criteria for the tasks in our course design I am using some of those given in Candlin (1987). P. 9 when he discusses the criteria which 'good' tasks should meet. Several lists of criteria are given and the categories often overlap. Here is what I understand from the discussion:

(a) Differentiated

For Candlin tasks must achieve a balance between being limited in

scope and open-ended. They should be usable at different levels in the course, so that we can gradually give the learner more freedom and more confidence, and build these changes into the course design. The tasks can be used for different learners with different needs, working in the same framework.

(b) Co-operative

The tasks should require participation by the learner and involvement with other learners, or as Candlin puts it 'developing social and management skills for learning.' This reflects the fact that few of our students will be using their skills alone, and that for most people it is more rewarding to learn together. Cooperation means not only among students but between students and teacher, thus, when students work together the teacher has more opportunities to check on the way the students are working, and more opportunities to receive and channel feedback.

(c) Strategic

Focus on the acquisition and development of personal strategies for language learning and problem solving. As we have mentioned before, this is an opportunity for acquiring and practising strategies in meaningful context. Solving a problem and completing a task rarely involve single strategies in real, life.

(d) Critical

The student can 'answer back' by obtaining his own feedback from the task and changing the task to suit his own need. As he acquires more fluency he can use the task framework to meet his own priorities and solve his own problems. In the case of summarizing the student can direct the task from the first choice of the text to the summary format. By observing this process the teacher can obtain important feedback on how the student is satisfying his own needs.

In addition Candlin mentions other features such as motivation, and relevance to the needs of the learners which I am taking for granted are characteristic of any materials that we prepare for our own students.

In the next section, let's put this into practice and see how it works in a real course design.

5.5 The Summary and Course Design.

One point that Candlin does not make is how to introduce the task into course design. It is not sufficient to suddenly ask the class to carry out a task even if we consider that they are ready in terms of ability and motivation to do this. The task must be introduced into the course design in stages, of sub-tasks, each fulfilling the criteria we examined above, so that students gradually acquire familiarity and confidence in the use of the strategies which eventually will be combined in the target task at a later stage of the course. The next step in this paper, then is to offer suggestions on how to integrate the writing of a study-summary into a course design for an EAP reading course.

6.0 An Example: Stages to Summary Writing

6.1 Analysing the Target Task

The first step is to find out where we are going, so as to direct the activities of the first stages of our course towards a definite goal. We need, then, to analyse the target task and identify the components which structure this task and can be integrated into the course design.

The target task is to prepare a summary of an important text for the student's personal use in studying his specialism. The summary is chosen in preference to note-taking since it must be useful in the long term (notes may not be very explicit after a couple of months) and it can be used by colleagues (the student can swap summaries with others and benefit form the work of others).

The characteristics of the target task are as follows:

(a) Type of text

Students work with complex texts with previously unknown subject matter

(b) Text selection

Students have unlimited freedom to select texts from libraries or resource centres.

(c) Strategies

In the target situation students work alone with occasional consultations from colleagues or the teacher.

(d) Autonomy

The student in a real life situation has total autonomy as to how the summary will be prepared in terms of presentation and in terms of focus, degree of objectivity or criticism.

These factors can now be fitted into the course design as follows:

	INITIAL STAGES	LATER STAGES
Text type:	Simple, well-organised, known subject matter	Complex texts Unknown subject matter
Text Selection	Chosen by the teacher	Selected by the student
Strategies	Whole class, working together on same text Limited aims, eg. note-taking	Working alone, occasional consultations
Autonomy	Structured activity; Teacher gives instructions	Independence, develop own strategies

6.2 Classroom management: activities within the task

The tasks as they are built up through the course design, provide opportunities for feedback on the learning process. We can identify three aspects which are present in each task: self-evaluation, where the students learn to monitor their own performance, monitoring by the teacher, who is observing the students' learning and diagnosing problems, and finally the teacher's feedback where the teacher discusses the students' learning and gives any advice and information which is considered necessary.

As the course progresses the students gradually acquire a greater ability to self-evaluate, and at each stage the task offers different opportunities for feedback. At the beginning, however, students usually have great difficulties in diagnosing their own problems and needs, so the activities must gradually build up this ability.

The structure of the task sequence which we give here moves from simple note-taking at a level of general comprehension to informal

summaries prepared in groups and finally to individual summaries where students choose their own texts. This is one format which has proved successful with many different types of student, but there should be other ways to structure summary-writing. The course consists of other aims as well as summary writing, there is normally work on language, other reading and learning skills, awareness-building and critical reading, but it can all be made use of in summarizing activities.

6.3 First stage: Note-taking; single text.

(a) Aim of task

To prepare notes on a text chosen by the teacher. Students are asked to read the text, note down the main ideas and the relationship between them. This can be done in the form of notes, a diagram, table or whichever seems most suitable. The most important feature of this activity is that students distinguish between which ideas are more important and which are less important.

As in all these activities, the students work in groups or pairs, using dictionaries if necessary, or asking teacher or colleagues to clear up doubts.

(b) Self-evaluation:

Students note the part of the text which seems most important, explain why and can compare if this is also important for the author. This can be discussed in class later.

(c) Monitoring

The teacher can go round the groups, checking that all the members are benefiting from the work. It is invaluable to observe the students in action. Sometimes the groups may not function ideally; if some members seem to be dominating the group, or alternatively, are 'passengers', then it may be necessary to change the group composition next time. It's also possible to check if there are any problems in carrying out the task and the teacher can relate these problems to language or to reading strategies, if possible.

(d) Feedback on the task.

The teacher needs to discuss the performance on the task, and to clear up any doubts. For those who haven't done any note-taking of this kind before it's interesting to compare the different ways in which the groups have solved the problem; lists, diagrams, columns etc.

At this stage students will need help in evaluating their own problems, since they will have had little experience of this before. Usually they will say 'Vocabulary' and identify 'difficult words' as their main problems.

6.4 Second stage: Guided summary: single text

(a) Aim of the task

To prepare a summary on a text chosen by the teacher, following instructions. (These are given in appendix 4) The students work in groups or pairs with the same text. The summary aims to identify the main ideas and then identify what is most important for the students themselves. In other words it is not an 'objective' summary, but reflects the reading process rather than abstracting.

(b) Self-Evaluation

As before, students justify their selection of the most important parts of the text. This time they may begin to evaluate their own problems in understanding the text or preparing the summary. They may give comments on the organisation of the text and the presence or absence of diagrams or other clues to meaning.

(c) Monitoring

The teacher again checks on the work of the groups as before. By now the groups should be reasonably homogeneous and should be developing their own methods of work. This helps weak and strong students to tackle the task in their own way.

(d) Feedback on the task

The teacher can still give collective feedback on the task, since the same text was used in the task. This time, however, the summaries will be a little different in form and content. This could be an opportunity to mark the summaries and give a grade. If the teacher wishes, students could be asked to hand in individual summaries for evaluation, even though they are the product of group work. In this way students pay attention to their grade, but are not hurt by a low mark since it was a group effort, and they don't take the grade personally.

A later stage (Stage 2a) could be the preparing of individual summaries, allowing students to work in groups if they think fit, but asking for individual assessments of the choice of section of the text and the difficulties encountered.

6.5 Third stage: Individual summaries

(a) Aim of the task

To select a text, using the criteria of interest and usefulness and prepare an individual summary, following the same instructions as in the previous stage, if necessary. As before they can work in groups to clear up any problems, but the work will be very largely with individual texts. If some students wish, perhaps a couple can work together on a text of special interest.

(b) Self-Evaluation

Students should now be able to analyse their own performance in carrying out the task. They will also by now be becoming more aware of problems in text selection, and in making an efficient use of time available

(c) Monitoring

The teacher will now be monitoring many different summary-writing tasks, but by this time will also be more aware of where the help is most needed. One problem at this stage will be due to the selection of inappropriate texts, especially 'target' texts which would have caused difficulty even if they had been written in Portuguese. Another problem may come from the selection of journalistic texts. Guidance in text selection may be necessary here.

(d) Feedback on the task

Time-consuming for the teacher if he needs to 'correct' each summary individually, and read the original text carefully. This may be very difficult if a teacher has a number of classes of forty students or so. One solution with very large classes is to limit the choice of texts. If the students can choose from eight or ten texts then the teacher will be able to read the originals and also offer students the opportunity to choose appropriate texts.

6.6 Fourth stage: Further work.

The teacher can now continue on this work of summarizing, so that it becomes a routine activity which can be used for feedback or for grades whenever the teacher or the programme say this should take place.

As students carry out this activity more often, they will be able to explore the language more and the use of reading strategies will develop in fluency. The initial problems that students usually have will tend to diminish in importance with practice.

These problems are usually:

(a) Misuse of time. The students spend a lot of time on the reading task and not enough on the noting down or writing, so that the final product is not very polished.

(b) Getting bogged down in details. Students may not be able to distinguish the more and less important details in the text, and spend too long on too many details.

(c) Translation. It may seem to students that when they come to a section of great importance, such as detailed instructions, - the only way to deal with it is by translating, so as not to miss anything. It may need some practice before students are able to make detailed notes instead, and feel confident that those notes are valid. This confidence is very important; it's no good making students take notes if they feel that important information may escape them so that they should be translating.

(d) Text selection. At the beginning students are often over-ambitious or over timid, so they may select texts that are difficult in themselves in terms of content, or very short and easy texts. This problem usually corrects itself with practice. There may be problems when students choose journalistic texts from magazines, which have a vocabulary all their own. Later students may select texts which are 'badly written' in the sense that they are disorganised, do not follow the text structures that have been examined in class, or the use of terms tends to confuse. They will need help from the teacher in identifying this source of difficulty at first.

Finally, summaries are an excellent means of proving to outsiders that your ESP course was successful. The results of multiple choice tests can be faked, or the tests can be made deliberately easy so that everyone passes, but if the ESP teacher can show the students' summaries and the original texts for comparison, even the most sceptical sponsor or specialist teacher will be convinced. As we mentioned before, when students come to the end of their ESP course and they can produce summaries as part of their academic activities it gives a genuine sense of achievement and pride in their own work.

7.0 Conclusion

We have come a long way from baking a cake to integrating evaluation and learning via the use of summary writing activities in class. Basing our analysis on the notion of two different types of feedback and control we have tried to show how these concepts, originating in systems analysis, can be applied to most of the literature that deals with language teaching methodology, from the original theories to classroom practice.

This has led us to examine the concepts of teacher-proof and teacher-autonomous approaches to teacher training and advice, where we find a similar wide application. In fact, when it comes to methodology, it doesn't matter how liberal the advice or how student-centred the approach, the way that this advice is applied in the classroom makes an often crucial difference.

Our main problem in examining different types of feedback was with regard to evaluation and ways to integrate evaluation with meaningful

learning. At the end of this paper we described a way of integrating an evaluation activity, such as summary writing into the students' learning experience and the course design of an EAP reading comprehension course.

In the literature there are many examples of practical materials for promoting closed-loop feedback and helping students and teachers to monitor more closely the learning process. One example comes from Weinstein et al. (1988) when they give an interesting example of a set of questions by which students can evaluate their own learning starategies. They call this the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI).

In the appendices we give some practical materials for teachers to use. In Appendix 1 we provide a questionnaire which teachers can answer to analyse their own teaching, and in Appendix 2 the original instructions for an evaluation/learning activity involving summary writing.

Appendix 3 gives some examples of how to obtain and channel feedback in the classroom by using personal record cards. These are based on materials originating in the UK. (OCEA 1987) and adapted by Cavalcanti (1988). They are at present being piloted by the team at the Escola Técnica Federal de Química in Rio de Janeiro. A report will be published in a forthcoming issue of 'the ESPecialist.'

It is difficult to discuss innovations in language teaching without appearing to advocate teacher-proof solutions that are valid for everyone in all circumstances. If we have appeared dogmatic from time to time this is a natural human failing, - we meant to be enthusiastic but we were aware that our solutions would not be valid for everyone at any time. If our advice is taken as dogma then it only helps to illustrate the principle that it takes two sides to be authoritarian: the authority and the acolyte who is looking for someone who knows 'the truth'. This paper was intended to raise a topic that may be important for many teachers. We hope that if you have any ideas to add or criticisms to make then you will make use of the project publications to make your own contribution.

One thing that writing this working paper has taught me (to drop the 'academic we' for a moment) is that feedback turns any creative process into one of constant renewal. The most difficult decision is not when to reformulate but when to stop! This working paper could have been written time and time again, and in the age of the word processor this is a great temptation, as other people's comments cause changes and spark new ideas of one's own. There's no guarantee the product becomes 'better' of course!

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

Feedback in Classroom Management: A Check List for Teachers

To evaluate how much closed-loop feedback is incorporated into your teaching, answer the questions below. If you answer 'Yes' to less than half the questions then you should consider adopting a more flexible and open way of teaching. If you answer 'Yes' to almost all the questions, you should consider if your own students agree with you, or think you too extreme and not authoritative enough! Remember that all change needs to take place in moderation.

1. Do you always use home-produced materials?

2. Do you reject the idea of your team producing and publishing a textbook for your students?

3. Do your students' test scores rarely surprise you? (Good students always with good grades, and weak students with poor grades)

4. Do you evaluate your students regularly throughout the course?

5. Do you discuss your evaluation with your students?

6. Do you often alter what you were planning to do in the middle of the class because of students' reactions?

7. Do your students bring materials (texts, etc.) to class which you then use in the course?

8. Do you ever carry out research in your own classroom, either just for kicks or with the intention of publishing?

9. Do you ever discuss the results of your classroom research with your students?

10. Do different groups of students sometimes carry out different types of activities at the same time?

11. Do you change your course design after discussion with students, during the course?

12. Do you ever observe a colleague and discuss the class? (and vice-versa, do you let colleagues observe you?)

13. Do your students evaluate you formally, in class?

14. Do you give feedback as quickly as possible?

Any more suggestions for this checklist would be welcome!

APPENDIX TWO
INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDY-SUMMARY

Translation for instructions for a study-summary which can be used as a final evaluation or by changing the presentation slightly, as a classroom exercise to be used at various points during the course.

FINAL EVALUATION
Reading Technical Texts in English

1. OBJECTIVE

The aim of this evaluation is the preparation of a summary which shows your capacity to read technical texts in English at a suitable level of comprehension.

Choose a text which you can comment on as a whole and from which you can prepare a summary or a set of notes.

2. PROCEDURES

(Before writing your summary)

2.1 First of all skim through the whole text and determine:

(a) which are the principal divisions.
(b) what are the author's objectives (sell a product, provide information etc.)
(c) for what kind of readership the text was written.

2.2 **Next:**

(a) Note the main points of the text (in rough)
(b) Identify the most important sections of the text

3.0 THE SUMMARY

3.1 **Introduction:**

(a) The title, the source and who the text was written for.
(b) The main divisions of the text.

3.2 **Detailed summary of a part of the text**

(a) The importance of the chosen section (for you)
(b) The main ideas of this part, in the form of notes, a diagram or written paragraphs.

3.3 **Evaluation of your effort**

(a) Mention the main problems you encountered: vocabulary, grammar, non-technical terms etc.
(b) Did you manage to identify all the important information? What was the section you found must difficult to understand?
(c) Your critical opinion: did you choose a text that was interesting and useful for you?

Original Instructions for summarizing activity used as final evaluation for Rede Globo ESP course for electronics technicians

AVALIAÇÃO FINAL

Leitura de textos técnicos em inglês

1. OBJETIVO

A finalidade desta avaliação é a preparação de um resumo que mostre a sua capacidade de ler textos técnicos em inglês a nível de compreensão geral.

Escolha um texto de qual você poderá fazer comentários gerais a respeito do texto como um todo, e preparar um resumo ou fazer anotações.

2. PROCEDIMENTOS

Antes de escrever seu resumo:

2.1 Primeiramente, faça um skimming do texto todo e determine:

(a) quais são as divisões principais.
(b) quais são os objetivos do autor (vender um produto, fornecer informações etc.)
(c) quais são as pessoas para quem o texto é destinado.

2.2 Em seguida:

(a) Anote os pontos principais do texto, (em rascunho)
(b) Identifique as partes mais importantes do texto

3.0 O RESUMO

3.1 **Introdução:**

(a) O título, a fonte e para quem o texto é destinado.
(b) As divisões principais do texto.

3.2 **Resumo de uma parte do texto**

(a) A importância da parte escolhida (para você)
(b) As principais idéias desta parte, em forma de anotações, diagrama ou pequena redação.

3.3 **Avaliação de seu desempenho**

(a) Mencione os principais problemas que você encontrou: -vocabulário, gramática, termos não técnicos, etc.
(b) Você conseguiu identificar todas as informações importantes? Qual foi o trecho mais difícil de entender?
(c) Sua opinião crítica: você escolheu um texto interessante e útil para você?

APPENDIX THREE

Tânia Mara Franco Cavalcanti

Personal Recording Cards

1.0 Purpose

The objective of these personal recording cards is to help teachers and students assess their own learning throughout the course. A fuller account of the evaluation process is given in Cavalcanti (1988) and here we give only a few examples.

At this stage we should simply mention that in order to use these cards the student must have clear in his mind the aim of each task or learning activity so that he can assess his performance in his personal record card later, stating how well he reached that aim.

These cards have been prepared using as a model the evaluation procedures suggested in the materials produced by the Oxford Certificate of Educational Achievement (1987 and 1988)

2.0 Use of the cards

The cards can be used before and after specific activities or at specific stages in the course. These cards are given in English but clearly they should be translated into the mother tongue to help students communicate their ideas more freely.

Example 1: Evaluating Needs and Wants

NEEDS AND WANTS

Complete the sentences:

I most enjoy the class when_____

The teacher should_____

It would be better if students _____

I don't feel at ease when _____

The teacher should never_____

I would be better motivated to come to class if I knew that

_____

To learn more effectively I need_____

I am not interested in class work when_____

I'd love it if _____

Example 2: Team Work and Relationships

TEAM WORK AND RELATIONSHIPS

Answer YES or NO according to your feeling towards the statements:

I always try to defend my points of view. _____

I like to work together with my classmates. _____

I give much importance to what others think of me. _____

I think it's worthwhile showing what I know _____

I make many contributions to group work. _____

I believe I can learn from my classmates _____

I am able to convince others when I'm sure about something. _____

I am often influenced by another student's view point. _____

I am able to take advice from others. _____

I think cooperation between students is important. _____

In my opinion, leadership capacity is essential for one to succeed. _____

I learn better when I study with another person. _____

Example 3: Reading Skills and Strategies

READING SKILLS AND STRATEGIES

Select the appropriate comment:

ALWAYS SOMETIMES SELDOM NEVER

I am able to use my knowledge of the world to help me understand a text _____

I can predict the main topic of an article by having an overall look at it _____

I can scan for particular details _____

I can work out the best way of reading something depending on what I want to find out. _____

I can make inferences fairly successfully _____

I can read with sufficient understanding to complete the task I am currently engaged on. _____

I can recognize the techniques which writers use and the effects they may have on the reader _____

I am able to distinguish between facts and opinions _____

I can identify the use of persuasive language _____

I can question the motives of writers _____

I am able to recognise bias and manipulation. _____

I can distinguish features of certain kinds of texts _____

I know how to make intelligent use of a dictionary. _____

I can transfer verbal information into charts, diagrams, etc. _____

I know where to look for required information because I can understand textual structure. _____

I am able to differentiate one format of text from another (e.g. report from instruction) _____

I can state the source of different types of texts. _____

I can recognise and consider varieties of narrative patterns. _____